

If Direct TV and Echostar are permitted to merge, I would like to see ALL the satellite TV channels un-bundled and available for subscription on a per channel basis. In other words, I would like to be able to purchase ANY selection of channels (for example TLC, NASA, FOX News, CNN, CSPAN, and SOME local channels) on a monthly basis and have ONLY those channels show up on my channel selection menu (like it does on cable ready TVs). Currently, the only way to do this with satellite TV is to buy one or more "basic" packages at a fairly high cost that includes a bunch of stuff (infomercials, etc) that I don't care about (if they want to provide me the "junk" channels for free, that's fine, but their set top boxes should allow them to be deleted from the channel line-up if I don't want to view them). While I am in favor of this merger, a potential problem I see is the content and cost of these "basic" packages could be manipulated to extract "whatever the market will bear" in a monopolistic situation where other alternatives are not available. If the merged organization had to offer and publish costs for individual channels, it would limit their ability to unjustly escalate the cost of "packages" as well as provide useful options to all consumers, even those with other alternatives.